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Evolution of the evaluation system of education in India: A comparative analysis

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Abstract

Evaluation is a technique that effectively provides comprehensive information about a student. Thus, it is an integral part of the education system. This study examines the evolution of the evaluation system in Indian education from ancient times to the contemporary era. Content analysis is employed to interpret the data. It explores the diverse paradigms of evaluation systems across periods, including the Vedic, Epic, Dharmasastra, Buddhist, Medieval, British, and Contemporary periods. It illustrates a dynamic transition from the oral, character-centric, and holistic evaluations of the ancient period to the written, performance-based, and standardized testing models of the contemporary era. The study also compares the evaluation systems across these different periods. The contemporary system is more inclusive and structured but often lacks the individualized and value-based evaluation that was an integral part of the earlier systems. This study emphasizes the need to reimagine modern evaluation practices by integrating the strengths of traditional approaches with the demands of present-day education.

1 Introduction

Evaluation is a crucial component of education (Patel, 2023). In the context of education, evaluation entails a more extensive examination process. To measure cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning outcomes, it includes the development of attitudes, interests, personality traits, and skill components (Sharma, 2014). It provides grading and certification in the Indian education system, which rests primarily on examinations, which play a crucial role in a learner's academic progression (Examination Reform Policy, 2018). It helps in decision-making and development (Ranjan, 2019). It is a comprehensive process that includes qualitative descriptions of a learner's behavior and performance (Pawan and Neha, 2021). It includes assessment of course outcomes, knowledge gained, and the quality of a student's performance. Evaluation is thus a continuous, holistic, and integral Part (Pawan and Neha, 2021). Evaluation and its allied processes like unit test, formative and summative assessment, internal and external examination, co-curricular activities, etc., have expanded across public and private sectors (Segerholm, 2020). These types of evaluation provide students with a complete overview of academic achievements and recognition of holistic growth (Shivani et al., 2024).

However, the present evaluation system has a long history. It has travelled a long way to reach its present form. So, the evolution of the evaluation system in India's educational context has been a complex and dynamic process. The concept of the evaluation system originated in the ancient period (Singh, 2019), but it was an informal system at the time (Pathak, 2011). Nevertheless, its process changed gradually. The period in Vedic education was highly individualized, and teachers judged students by asking questions or through debate (Sharma and Sharma, 2004). When Buddhism was prevalent in India, particularly during the Buddhist and Post-Vedic periods, when education was initiated at Takshila and Nalanda (Agarwal, 2009), evaluation became somewhat structured, involving oral debates, discussions, and performance in scholarly discourse (Thapar, 2002). During the medieval period, when Islamic rule was in vogue, the *maktabs and madrasas*, which were centers of learning, included

oral tests, debate, and a 'question-and-answer approach' in assessing pupils (Kumar, 2005). Then, the British East India Company, with many European missionaries, came to India. The British Indian Education system started formal examinations. They planned to centralize control of the Indian Education System by introducing an examination system. So, the students limited their learning only to what should be covered in the examination, and the rest was left (Kumar, 2012). This led to the rise of summative assessments, competitive examinations, and standardized grading (Seth, 2007). However, post-independence, the Indian education system focused on reforming evaluation to promote holistic development through various educational commissions, committees, and policies. Evaluation has also been altered by the addition of digital, competency-based assessment and formative feedback systems, as added by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the new technical changes. This has led the assessment system to become a dynamic, never-ending process (NEP, 2020). Now, we find the evaluation system in education to be a continuous and ever-changing process. This evolution reflects not only the changing educational needs of the country but also the broader social, political, and economic shifts in India. This system does not change suddenly; it changes slowly, year by year. India's current evaluation system reflects a larger effort to compromise between the demands of a competitive, exam-driven culture and the requirement for all-encompassing, student-centered approaches. Ensuring the successful implementation of reforms that are equitable, accessible, and aligned with the objectives of holistic education will be the challenge going forward. A move toward fostering critical thinking, creativity, and 21st-century abilities is seen. There is a continuous change from a strict, exam-centric approach to a more comprehensive, student-oriented evaluation paradigm.

The evolution of the Indian educational evaluation system from the Vedic period to the present is significant, as it has been shaped over centuries through cultural reforms and policy-driven changes. Evaluation has evolved from the individualized and holistic assessment in ancient times to the standardized test-based evaluation during British rule, and now to competency-based assessment under the NEP 2020. Changing educational priorities, needs, and social values are revealed at every stage. This paper is important for understanding how the evaluation system in Indian education evolved from the Gurukul system to the present, and what its best practices are.

The following research questions came to mind for the researcher to investigate the matter; how was the evaluation system in education during the ancient period in India, and how far do the evaluation systems of different periods differ from one another. To provide proper guidance on these research questions, the following objectives are formulated: to analyze the evaluation system in the Indian educational context from the ancient period to the present era (i.e., Ancient, Medieval, British Colonial, and Contemporary periods), and to compare the evaluation system in the Indian educational context among these periods.

2 Methods

This study uses a qualitative content analysis method. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a structured research method for interpreting, organizing, and analyzing textual or visual data to uncover patterns, themes, meanings, and insights. This method helps to analyze how the Indian educational evaluation system has changed from ancient to contemporary times. It is based on secondary sources, such as books, academic journals, and educational policy papers. The study examines how the procedures of student evaluation have evolved throughout time.

3 The evaluation system in the Indian educational context

The evaluation system in India has changed significantly from ancient times to the present day. It indicates the changes in educational goals, institutions and socio-political factors. Here, the researcher gives a chronological overview of different periods and the evolution of the evaluation system in India.

3.1 Evaluation system in the ancient period

The ancient period comprises four sub-periods: the Vedic period (Early Vedic and Later Vedic), the Epic period, the Dharmasastra period, and the Buddhist period (Narain, 2024). Teachers in this period used to judge their students using an individualistic approach (Paul, 2021; Biswas, 2023). Screening tests are used for student admissions, entrance tests for higher education, and continuous assessment for grading students (i.e., formative evaluation) (Narain, 2024).

3.1.1 Vedic period

The Vedas provide direction on many facets of life in general and the education system in particular (Chakma and Nath, 2025). At that time, education was imparted through *Gurukulas,* without a written syllabus, examinations, or evaluation methods (Mishra and Aithal, 2023; Lal, 2024). The teacher used to observe every activity of his students, including their temperament and behavior (Patel, 2023). In Vedic education, a teacher's evaluation was more qualitative and was focused on holistic development, including behavior, character, ethics, and spiritual development (Hanspal, 2024). The Vedic period is divided into the Early and Later Vedic periods (Lal, 2024).

3.1.1.1 Early Vedic period

During the early Vedic period, education was deeply internalized among students through religious and philosophical training. Students were evaluated not by formal tests (Sharma and Sharma, 2004) but through daily recitations, oral performances with particular phonography, meditation, obedience to the teacher, and moral character (Narain, 2024). The graphical representation beautifully explains the process (**Fig. 1**).

Initial screening test – Before agreeing to grant a studentship, an *acharya* (teacher) must inquire about the student's background. By looking closely at the boy and asking pertinent questions, he can determine whether the student is suitable for studentship based on his moral fitness (Narain, 2024). *Formal studentship* – The studentship starts with the *Upanayana* ceremony. This is a three-day program that culminates in the student being declared a *Brahmachari* (Narain, 2024). *Ongoing assessment* – A fundamental principle of Vedic education was that the student must live with the teacher after formally adopting studentship or *Brahmacharya*. In the Vedic system, learning was assessed by the teacher (*Acharya*) through continuous observation rather than by recurring tests. The Guru evaluated the students' development daily by observing their behavior, recitation, understanding, memory, and

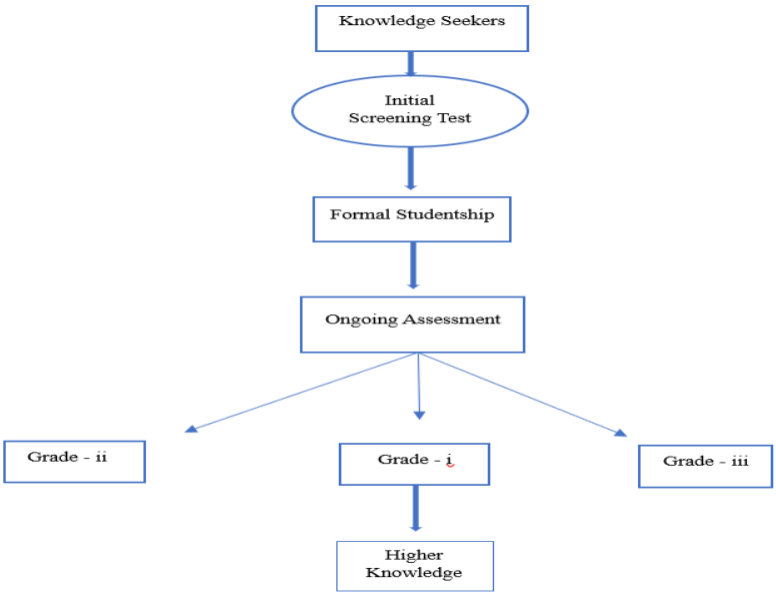

Fig. 1. Structure of evaluation of the early Vedic period (modified after Narain, 2024).

discipline. The *Guru-Shishya* relationship was based on this ongoing assessment. Through this assessment, a *Guru* gives three grades to his students: (a) *Maha Prazanan*: student having high intellectual ability, who are allowed for higher knowledge, (b) *Madhyam Prazanan*: medium ability students, who are allowed to go for occupations like ploughing, looming, etc., (c) *Alpa Prazanan*: low ability students who are dismissed from studentship (Narain, 2024).

3.1.1.2 Later Vedic Period

The evaluation in the later Vedic period was no formal. Here, different forms of evaluation patterns were included:

Assessment for imparting education: A typical studentship during the later Vedic period lasts twelve years, where the teacher used different assessment methods (Narain, 2024). These are: *Oral examinations* – This approach was essential to oral tradition in the Vedic culture. This method of examination was oral recitation and explanation. The *shishyas* were expected to precisely recite and memorize significant texts like the Vedas and satisfy the teacher (Mishra and Aithal, 2023). *Practical application* – Knowledge was evaluated by its application to real-life situations. The teacher observed his pupils' ability to apply practical knowledge in real situations through accurately carried-out yajnas (sacrificial ceremonies) and day-to-day activities (Mishra and Aithal, 2023). *Behavioral observations* – The teacher evaluated pupils according to their behavior and moral fiber. Moral and ethical instruction was of the utmost importance, and pupils were evaluated on their compliance with Ashrama (duties of life stages) and Dharma (righteousness) (Mishra and Aithal, 2023).

External Test: Before finishing his education, a student who participates in debates and is occasionally put to the test when asked questions in a learned assembly or outside. His status as a scholar or a true *Snataka* was dependent on his ability to respond to the questions satisfactorily; if he were unable to do so, he would either return to his teacher or seek guidance from another learned scholar to make up the knowledge gap (Mishra and Aithal, 2023; Narain, 2024).

3.1.2 Epic period

The Epic period of Indian history, marked by the composition of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, reflects an educational system rooted in the *Guru-Shishya Parampara*, a relationship of deep trust, reverence, and discipline between teacher and student. During this era, evaluation was not institutionalized through written tests or grades, as in modern systems. Instead, evaluation was ongoing, oral, practical, and holistic, encompassing moral conduct, memorization skills, philosophical understanding, and application of knowledge. The primary modes of evaluation were recitation, oral debate (*shastrartha*), and performing duties, as guided by the *guru*. A student's ability to retain Vedic hymns, engage in rational discourse, and apply dharma in real-life situations was a measure of learning. In the *Mahabharata*, for instance, Arjuna's excellence in archery is acknowledged not through examination but through demonstration of skills, leading to special instruction from Dronacharya. Additionally, a student's discipline, character, and humility were key factors in the evaluation. The *Ramayana* describes Rama and his brothers being trained under Sage Vasishtha and later Vishwamitra, where evaluation was based on their obedience, mental fortitude, and application of *dharma* (Valmiki, Ramayana, Book I). Rama's composure, ethical clarity, and physical prowess indicated his successful education. Moreover, public debates and philosophical discussions served as platforms for evaluating and disseminating knowledge. Scholars and sages would engage in dialectical debates in royal courts or forest hermitages, demonstrating their command of the scriptures and serving as a mechanism for peer evaluation (Kane, 1962).

3.1.3 Dharma Sastra period

This period introduced legalistic and codified education, as seen in texts like Manu Smriti. Evaluation criteria became more systematised, emphasising ethical conduct, scriptural knowledge, and social responsibilities (Kane, 1930). Failure to live by dharma often resulted in exclusion from learning privileges, demonstrating that assessment extended beyond academics (Chakrabarti, 2003). **Figure 2** provides an overview of the evaluation system.

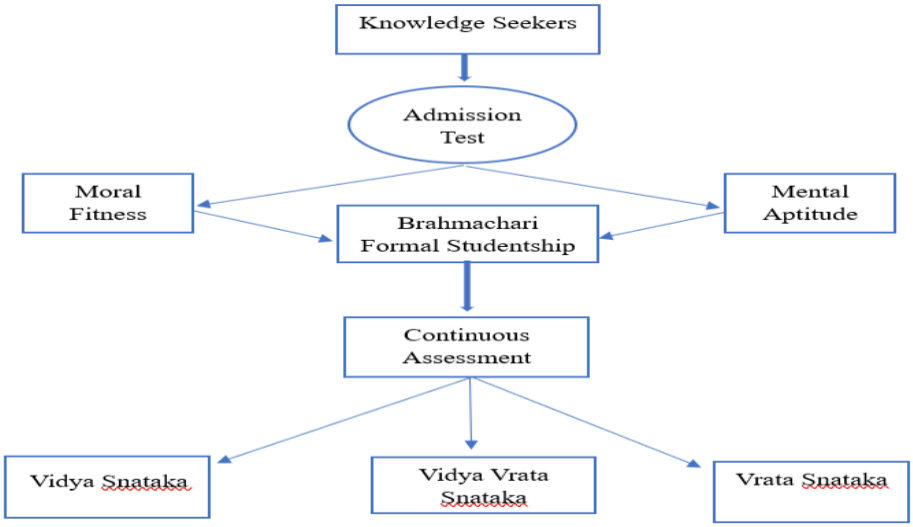

Fig. 2. Structure of evaluation during the Dharma Sastra period (modified after Narain, 2024).

The evaluation methods are as follows: *Admission test:* The admission test was mandatory for students. This type of examination included (a) Moral fitness – The student should be rational and possess restrained passion. He must be straightforward, pure-hearted, and able to follow *Brahmacharya's* rigorous rules. (b) Mental aptitude – He should have a sharp mind and be sufficiently intelligent, rather than uninteresting and unable to learn new things (Narain, 2024).

Continuous Assessment: The full Vedic course of study was not continuous; it lasted twelve years. Instead, it was a graduate program divided into multiple sections, which could be called modules in modern parlance. A *Vrata* was supposed to open each of these modules. These *Vratas* lasted for a whole year or more. Through *Vratas*, the instructor closely monitors each student's development, inner strength, and academic achievement (Narain, 2024). A teacher has been granted three graduate degrees through this process: *Vidya Snataka*, *Vrata Snataka,* and *Vidya Vrata Snataka* (Narain, 2024).

3.1.4 Buddhist period

Narain (2024) has mentioned three types of assessments in education during the Buddhist period.

Assessment by the teacher – Education under the Buddhist system included both general conduct and religious teachings. The novice student needed to submit to the tutelage of his teacher, who was expected to provide constant monitoring and had to observe his student. I.T. Siang describes it beautifully. He says, "*He (teacher) inspects pupils' moral conduct and warns them of defects and transgressions. Whenever he finds his pupil faulty, he makes him seek remedies and present*".

Self-Assessment System – The *Sutta-Vibhanga* of the Buddhist rule book lists several behavior-related offences. Every full moon day, before the assembly of monks and nuns, this was recited. After explaining each offence class, the assembled monks were asked if they were pure. If they felt that a man had engaged in violence in any way, he was expected to confess and receive a penance commensurate with the seriousness of his crime. This might be viewed as a self-evaluation of moral behavior, a component of the Buddhist educational system.

Evaluation by General Assembly – Chinese traveler I.T. Siang, who visited India in the seventh century and makes the following observations about monastic education and says: "*A place was also given to discussions and debate, at least in the higher Part of the course, and the man's ability seems to have been very largely judged by his power to vanquish opponents in discussion. These men got a royal appointment and whose names were, as a reward, inscribed in lofty gates*".

It is suggested that a student's performance, as measured by his ability to engage in debate and discussion, was assessed by a group of people using a consensus voice. However, if the discussions took place in the king's Court or among the learned men seated in front of the assembly, then the king or the learned man rendered the final decision.

3.2 Evaluation system in the Medieval period

During the medieval period in India, education was primarily imparted through traditional institutions such as *Gurukuls, Pathsalas, Tols, Chottuspathi, Maktabs, and Madrasas,* which were structured around religious teachings and philosophical studies (Sharma and Sharma, 2023). The Muslim system impacted the educational system during the Medieval period. Several changes were made to the educational system during this time (Biswas, 2024). The evaluation of students was informal, heavily reliant on oral tests and debates. The evaluation of students was not conducted through standardized exams or tests but rather through regular activities, such as continuous recitation, questioning, and teacher observation, rather than written examinations (Mookherji, 1947; Ghosh, 2001). The primary objective of these assessment methods was to assess students' performance and learning ability (Shit, 2020). There were no yearly or semi-annual tests that the students had to take. They were evaluated periodically in real-world scenarios (Biswas, 2024; Ghonge et al., 2020) Moreover, student learning was completed while teachers were satisfied with their learners (Habib, 2015). He granted the three degrees: "*Those who have special qualification for the religion of Islam were awarded the degree of Aamil, those who have special aptitude in Arabic & Persian literature were awarded the degree of Quabil, those who have special qualification in logic & philosophy were awarded the degree of Phazil*" (Singh, 2019).

3.3 Evaluation system in the British period

During British colonial rule in India (Bansal, 2017), the educational evaluation system underwent a significant transformation (Kambala and Ramakrishna, 2023; Vajiram, 2025). Before British rule, traditional Indian education primarily focused on oral transmission, holistic learning, and character development rather than on formal assessments (Sharma, 2005). Through the Charter Act of 1813, the British Education System was formally established in India (Vajiram, 2025). With the advent of British policies (Murthy, 2018; Josh, 2020), the evaluation system in the Indian education system became more standardized and examination-oriented, aligning with the colonial objective of creating a class of clerks and subordinates to serve the administrative employment (Josh, 2020; Kambala and Ramakrishna, 2023; Dixit, 2023). The British government first introduced written examinations as a formal method of assessing student performance. These assessments frequently ignored indigenous knowledge systems, favoring rote learning, memory-based recall, and fluency in English and literature. (Kumar, 2005). This paradigm shift led to the decline of the traditional Indian culture of educational institutions like *Gurukuls, Tols, Pathsalas, Maktabs, and Madrasas,* which emphasized experiential and moral education over testing.

The Wood's Despatch of 1854 was considered the Magna Carta of English education in India, where institutionalized regular examinations, inspections of institutions, and certifications were used as tools of academic evaluation (Chatterjee, 2023). Annual examinations became the norm in schools, colleges, and universities, and this examination, which judged a student by their result, was often used to determine promotion to higher grades (Ullah, 1951; Sarkar and Rathee, 2023). As a result, education has shifted away from critical and creative thinking toward centralization and evaluation. During this time, the evaluation system emphasized administrative effectiveness and compliance more than intellectual development and cultural significance. (Nurullah and Naik, 1951). It also has an entrance test for admission to the University.

3.4 Evaluation system in the contemporary India

The education system in India dramatically changed after independence rather than colonialism (Bhattari, 2024). The evaluation system also changed. This system changed through various commissions, committees, educational policies, and educational schemes. The present

education system runs various evaluations in our nation. Here is an overview of different evaluation systems in the contemporary Indian education system.

The annual examination is conducted at the end of the course. It uses different boards or organizations, such as the school board, college, and University. However, it has a long history. The annual examination was first introduced in ancient China during the Sui Dynasty (581–618 AD) through the Imperial Examination (Keju) system (Elman, 2000). The British educational system adopted the concept of examination in the 19th century (Broadfoot, 1996). The British colonial era is intimately associated with the implementation of annual examinations in India. Most people agree that the Wood's Despatch of 1854 was a key document that influenced the development of modern education in India. It is a foundation for academic evaluation. It advocates written examination and stresses the creation of three universities based on the University of London (Nurullah and Naik, 1951). These three universities (Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras University) were established in 1857; they introduced the curriculum structure and formal annual examinations (Nial and Nag, 2024). Moreover, this system is ongoing today. At the school level, students take board examinations after the 10th and 12th grades (Secondary and Higher Secondary). These examinations are essential for deciding their academic and career pathways (Satish, 2024).

The Right to Education Act of 2009 makes the assessment procedure known as Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) mandatory in the education sector. Scholastic and Co-Scholastic Evaluation are included in CCE. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is a system of student assessments encompassing all aspects of education (Chauhan, 2024). It is used in Schools under CBSE, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, State Board Schools, and Teacher Education Institutes. **Figure 3** helps in understanding continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

The semester system is a scholastic evaluation system in which an academic year is divided into two parts, each lasting six months (Gunjan et al., 2024). It was first introduced at Howard University in 1636. The Agricultural University of Assam in India was the first to adopt it in 1959 (Sonwane, 2015). After that, this system was implemented across various educational institutions through recommendations from various education commissions, committees, and policies. Currently, it runs in higher secondary schools, colleges, and universities.

The entrance test is a gate pass for admission to an institution. It originated in the Vedic period and is still in practice (Narain, 2024). An open-book examination is a test where students are allowed to use their textbooks, notes, and other reference materials. This examination was introduced by the Central Board of Secondary Education in 2014, which implemented classes 9 and 11 (Kumar, 2024).

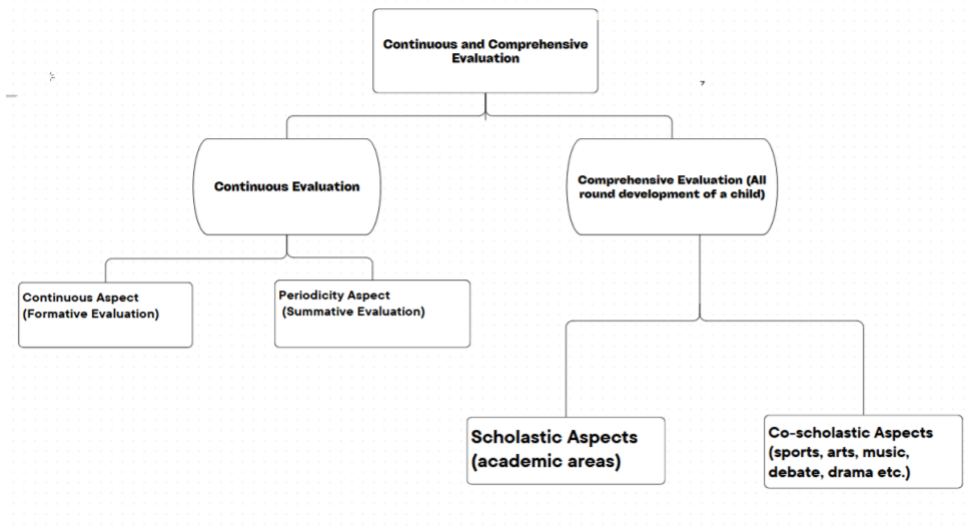
Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation
Continuous Evaluation
Comprehensive Evaluation (All round development of a child)
Continuous Aspect (Formative Evaluation)
Periodicity Aspect (Summative Evaluation)
Scholastic Aspects (academic areas)
Co-scholastic Aspects (sports, arts, music, debate, drama etc.)

Fig. 3. Structure of the continuous and comprehensive evaluation system (modified after Chauhan, 2024).

4 Comparison of evaluation systems among various periods

The comparison reveals a clear evolution in evaluation systems, shifting from informal, holistic, and learner-centered approaches in the ancient and medieval eras to more formal, standardized, and written exams during the British and modern periods (**Table 1**). Early Indian education focused on aptitude, ongoing observation, dialogue, debate, and self-assessment, typically within community-based institutions such as Gurukulas, Viharas, and Parishads. While medieval education continued to rely on oral and observational methods, it became more specific to individual institutions. The British era introduced a significant shift towards uniformity, certification, and high-stakes annual examinations, mainly for administrative purposes. Today, a hybrid approach prevails, combining traditional exams with reforms like CCE, semester systems, open-book tests, and entrance exams. Globally, modern assessment practices increasingly emphasize competency-based evaluation, formative feedback, lifelong learning, and holistic development, reflecting several principles of ancient Indian practices. This integration encourages exploration of how indigenous evaluative wisdom can inform current and future assessment reforms worldwide.

5 Discussion

The assessment system of early Vedic period was aptitude test and continuous evaluation; for later Vedic period it was oral examination, practical application, behavioral observation method, external test; for the epic period it was admission test and continuous assessment; for the Dharmasastra period it was oral recitation, debate, practical application, observation method, and peer evaluation; and for the Buddhist period it was observation method, self-assessment, debate, and discussion. Khichar and Lunayach (2025) found that continuous evaluation and practical demonstrations were used in ancient times. Singh (2019) held that the evaluation system was oral in the Vedic period. Hanspal (2024) also expresses the same. However, Paul (2021) and Bhat and Javaid (2024) said that the Buddhist education system used an entrance examination, which the present researcher did not find in his research.

Table 1. The comparison of the evaluation system between various periods.

Periods		Nature of evaluation	Institutions conducting evaluation	Methods
Ancient period	Early Vedic period	Informal	Sabha, samiti and vidatha (Capacity Building Commission, 2025)	Aptitude test and continuous assessment
	Later Vedic period	Informal	Gurukulas, ashrams, parishads, and pathashalas	Oral examination, practical application, behavioral observation method, external test
	Epic period	Informal	Gurukulas, ashrams and parishads	Admission test, continuous assessment
	Dharmasastra period	Informal	Gurukulas, ashrams and parishads	Oral recitation, debate, practical application, observation method, and peer evaluation
	Buddhist period	Informal	Viharas, mahaviharas and monastries	Observation method, self-assessment, debate, and discussion
Medieval period		Informal	Gurukuls, pathsalas, tols, chottuspathi, maktabs and madrasas	Oral test, debate, continuous assessment, observation method
British period		Formal and written	Schools, colleges, and universities	Annual examination and entrance test
Contemporary period		Formal and written	Schools, colleges, and universities	Annual examination, semester system, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, entrance test, and open book examination

The evaluation system in the medieval period included oral tests, debates, continuous assessment, and observation methods. Shit (2020) and Biswas (2024) also found that the examination system was regular and time-to-time, e.g., through continuous assessment. However, Biswas (2024) reports that students were tested on practical life skills, which the present researcher also did not find.

In the British colonial era, the focus of evaluation transitioned from comprehensive learning to standardized annual examinations, entrance tests, and certifications. Similarly, Ghonge et al. (2020) found that the entrance test, board examination, and annual examination were used to assess students, while Kaur (2020) found that the board examination was used to assess students. The researcher also found that the contemporary evaluation system was diverse, including annual examinations, the semester system, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, entrance tests, and open-book examinations. Some researchers, like Sangeeta (2023) and Ghonge et al. (2020), reported that pupils are assessed based on semester examinations and that an entrance test is conducted at frequent intervals, findings similar to those of the present study. Taral (2015) also emphasized that annual examination and continuous assessment are an important Part of the education system. Goyal and Aggarwal (2015) said that continuous and comprehensive evaluation is used for student assessment.

Each evaluation system across these distinct periods possessed unique strengths. However, the ancient informal evaluation system primarily focused on holistic development. These systems proved more effective during the Dharmasastra and Buddhist eras. They emphasized continuous assessment, oral recitation, debates, observational methods, peer evaluation, and self-assessment. These approaches foster academic knowledge, critical thinking, ethical behavior, and personal growth. In contrast, modern formal systems frequently priorities rote learning, examination scorecards, and degrees. Conversely, ancient practices nurtured individual potential and aligned education with essential life skills and moral values. Nevertheless, the contemporary system has been characterized by structured assessments, including the Semester system, CCE, and open-book examinations. Consequently, these methods are more practical within today's expansive educational environment. Ideally, a blended approach that integrates the personalized, value-based evaluations of antiquity with the systematic rigor of the modern evaluation system would produce the most balanced and beneficial outcomes.

6 Conclusion

The evaluation system of Indian education has undergone a dynamic evolution influenced by changing cultural paradigms and pedagogical goals. This trajectory demonstrates India's adaptability to educational needs across eras, starting with the comprehensive, individualized evaluations of the ancient *Gurukula* system, moving on to the strict standardization implemented during the British colonial era, and finally to the more varied and inclusive approaches observed in contemporary times. The evaluation in the ancient era was primarily qualitative and informal, ingrained in the *Guru-Shishya* tradition. Aptitude examinations, oral recitations, hands-on demonstrations, and ongoing observations were used to assess learning. These methods encouraged moral behavior. The Buddhist era fully understood internal moral and cognitive growth by introducing peer and self-evaluation. Subsequently, practices that emerged during the Middle Ages were unofficial, when evaluations relied on discussions, teacher observations, and oral transmission. Although scholarship thrived in *Maktabs, Madrasas, and Pathsalas*, religious influence grew stronger, leading to teacher-driven and non-standardized assessments.

India experienced a significant transformation in its education system with the onset of British colonialism. They introduced written examinations, annual assessments, and admission tests for higher education within the Indian educational system. At that time, evaluation was reframed as a means of certifying and selecting staff within a colonial context, thereby institutionalizing a formal examination-based system. Evaluation in contemporary India has evolved into a more comprehensive, diverse, and systematic practice. The coexistence of entrance examinations, annual and semester assessments, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, and even open-book formats signifies a gradual shift towards a more learner-centric approach. These methods emphasize creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and

academic rigor. The changing educational mindset, which prioritizes continuous feedback and holistic development, is further reflected in legislative measures such as the Right to Education Act (2009) and various educational reforms.

So, the Indian evaluation system has a long history. It began as a character-based system, became performance-centric during colonial control, and is now inclusive and multifaceted. This development emphasizes the need for a well-rounded strategy that respects historical knowledge while meeting the requirements of contemporary schooling.

7 Ethical statements

Not applicable.

8 Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study.

9 Data availability statement

We used data from various sources, including books, articles, and other materials, in this article.

10 Author contributions

Rajib Santra: Conceptualization and writing original draft. Rajiba Lochan Mohapatra: Conceptualization and writing review and editing. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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